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Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Situation analysis	1–8	2
II.	Past cooperation and lessons learned	9–12	3
III.	Proposed programme	13–35	4
IV.	Programme management, monitoring and evaluation	36–39	7
Annex			
	Results and resources framework		9

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I. Situation analysis

1. During the 1990s the Republic of the Congo experienced a succession of particularly destructive armed conflicts. The sociopolitical situation has gradually returned to normal since the signing of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities agreements at the end of 1999. A constitutional referendum and presidential, legislative and senatorial elections were held in 2002.

2. The Government has made a firm commitment to building peace, stability and security, without which no momentum can be generated for development. The latest peace agreement signed by the Government and the Pool rebels on 17 March 2003 is fully consistent with this trend towards national reconciliation.

3. The programme of the new Government, based on the President's societal plan, entitled "Nouvelle Espérance" (New Hope), has as its main aims: (i) ensuring peace, security and stability in the country, reorganizing the public administration, building its institutional capacity and promoting good governance; (ii) promoting steady economic growth; (iii) creating a viable network of basic infrastructure; (iv) eradicating unemployment; (v) reducing poverty and increasing access to basic services; (vi) raising the living standards of the Congolese people; (vii) relieving the State of its debt by pursuing cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions; (viii) continuing to restructure and diversify the financial system; (ix) reforming the tax system; (x) contributing to subregional integration. On the basis of this societal plan, the Government intends to prepare in 2003 a detailed programming framework for 2004-2009. This framework, which will be harmonized with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), will be set out in two 3-year plans and will specify the sectoral policies.

4. In accordance with the World Bank's classification scheme, the Republic of the Congo is a middle-income country. Nevertheless, with an estimated human development index of 0.512, the Republic of the Congo occupies the 136th place among the countries of the world, according to the *Human Development Report 2002*.

5. Paying off the external debt, which is still a major conditionality for multilateral cooperation (US$ 5.9 billion in 2001 and US$ 6.1 billion in 2002), has thus far prevented the Republic of the Congo from concluding an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The country is currently seeking admission to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative (HIPC) which would enable it to obtain debt relief. Such relief would make it possible to allocate the newly available resources to financing anti-poverty programmes and projects.

6. The challenges with which the Republic of the Congo will be faced during the next few years can be summed up as the re-establishment of lasting political, economic and environmental security, as follows:

Political security. Consolidation of peace, the democratic process and the rule of law, and the rooting of and respect for human rights in the day-to-day practices of the country's institutions;

Economic security. Elaboration of governmental strategies (PRSPs, United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), sectoral policies) for reducing poverty (70 per cent of the population lives below the poverty threshold; the school enrolment rate dropped from 79.5 per cent in 1992 to 62.5 per cent in

2002; barely 2 per cent of arable land is under cultivation) and creating jobs for youth (less than 2 per cent of the 965,000 young people of working age are employed in the formal sector).

Environmental security. Protection and rational management of natural resources in accordance with new approaches based on participation and partnership (petroleum and timber account for 99 per cent of exports and over 65 per cent of State revenue; the Congolese forest covers 65 per cent of the national territory).

7. In addition, HIV/AIDS, gender issues and new information and communication technologies (NICT) constitute major challenges. The AIDS pandemic, which has reached a 7.2 per cent infection rate, according to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), has become the leading cause of death. Women, who make up 52 per cent of the population and 70 per cent of the agricultural workforce, are still victims of inequality and violence. Lastly, the Republic of the Congo is experiencing a significant lag in NICT, which must be overcome.

8. In order to enable the Government to meet these challenges, the United Nations team in the Republic of the Congo has prepared a joint analysis and planning document tailored to the specific post-conflict situation of the Republic of the Congo — the United Nations Plan. This plan, first drawn up in 2000, has been updated twice, and comprises elements of the consolidated appeal process (CAP), the common country assessment (CCA) and the UNDAF. All of the actions initiated by UNDP and the agencies of the United Nations system fall within this planning framework. The launching of the CCA process, followed by the formulation of the UNDAF, is scheduled for 2004.

II. Past cooperation and lessons learned

9. As a result of the successive political crises and wars that the country has experienced, the last UNDP cooperation framework for the period 1987-1991 was not approved by the UNDP Executive Board. Instead, the Board authorized UNDP to continue providing assistance on an ad hoc (project) basis. Thus, in spite of the successive crises, UNDP assistance has not been interrupted.

10. Since the end of hostilities and in accordance with governmental priorities, the UNDP programme has revolved around "meeting the immediate needs of the population" and "support for democratic governance".

11. The results achieved by the various UNDP projects and initiatives in this post-conflict context include support for the gradual re-establishment of security (8,500 ex-combatants reintegrated and 12,000 light weapons destroyed), the restoration of basic social services (340 classrooms rehabilitated or refurbished, over 500 kilometres of rural roads rehabilitated, 63 water points installed) and the recovery of income-generating activities (nearly 20,000 jobs created). In addition, UNDP supported the publication of the first national human development report on the Republic of the Congo in 2002, as well as the preparation of the PRSP. Mention should also be made of the actions in support of parliamentary institutions (nearly 200 members of Parliament and officials trained and equipped), the promotion of justice and human rights (four legal clinics established, 330 police officers trained,

three service centres established for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the fight against AIDS (2,400 teachers and 3,595 pupils trained).

12. The main lessons learned from past cooperation at the end of the mid-term review in March 2003 can be summarized as: (i) the need to adopt a programme approach in order to maximize the impact of UNDP assistance (which has not been possible owing to the lack of sectoral policies and strategies); (ii) strengthening and deepening partnerships with NGOs and associations; (iii) the need for national institutions to assume ownership of the procedures and regularize the outcomes and impact of the projects and actions; (iv) national capacity-building in the area of economic management; and (v) the need to deepen and broaden partnerships with the private sector, particularly in the context of fighting poverty and HIV/AIDS and of environmental preservation and management.

III. Proposed programme

13. The preparation of this draft country programme, which was directed by the Government, took place through extensive consultation with civil society, the private sector, Parliament, donors, United Nations system agencies and other development assistance organizations.

14. The proposed programme is based on the strategic governmental documents referred to above, namely, "Nouvelle Espérance" and the interim PRSP. It is also consistent with the approaches adopted in the United Nations Plan for the Republic of the Congo, especially in its components involving support for the functioning of institutions based on the rule of law, good governance and poverty reduction. Lastly, it incorporates the concerns relating to the implementation of the millennium development goals (MDG), while being aligned with the major themes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

15. The priority sectoral themes are good governance, poverty reduction, and environmental and natural resources management. Added to these are the cross-cutting themes, namely, the fight against HIV/AIDS, NICT and gender issues, which will interact dynamically with the first set of priority themes for greater results and impact.

16. It is important to note that these three thematic areas are closely linked and interdependent. Such interdependence should be obvious in the implementation of the various programmes. It is essential, for instance, to link local development activities to local governance activities, or the fight against poverty to aspects of environmental protection and combating AIDS.

17. Strong synergies will therefore be developed among the activities linked to these three themes. The creation of synergies and partnerships with civil society, the private sector, other donors and development agencies will also be a major concern.

Governance

Building parliamentary capacity

18. UNDP will build the capacity of members of Parliament, the parliamentary civil service and the various committees so that they are better able to understand

and play their roles within the institution. Such capacity-building will be carried out by conducting appropriate training and by making available tools for economic, budgetary and legislative research and analysis.

Support for anti-fraud and anti-corruption measures

19. UNDP assistance in the fight against fraud and corruption will focus initially on analysis of the issues involved. It could then be reflected in the formulation of a strategy for combating these two phenomena and a subsequent plan of action.

Support for local governance; building the capacity of local communities

20. UNDP will provide support, first, for building the capacity of local community leaderships for the development of participatory planning tools and local control of owned infrastructure and, second, for the clarification and enhancement of certain laws linked to the transfer of competencies and resources. In the area of local governance, UNDP can support the local authorities in promoting the rule of law and building the capacity of decentralized and deconcentrated structures.

Support for the elaboration of governmental strategies (PRSP, framework plan, MDG, sectoral policies, flow chart for the coordination of governmental action, etc.)

21. UNDP will continue to assist the Government in the preparation of its final PRSP. It will also support the Ministry of Planning in the formulation of the triennial public investment programmes, in accordance with the PRSP approaches, while taking into account the MDG. Specific assistance in the elaboration of sectoral policies can also be considered. Support for the implementation of instruments and tools for coordinating and steering governmental action (flow chart, terms of reference) is also provided for in collaboration with the Ministry of State for the Coordination of Governmental Action.

Poverty

Support for local development initiatives

22. UNDP assistance will be aimed in particular at consolidating the lessons learned by communities in the area of local development initiatives. Such initiatives will adopt a participatory planning approach; they will contribute financial resources for multisectoral investment and build the capacity of local populations and communities in order to improve local governance.

Promotion of youth employment through the establishment of an appropriate institutional mechanism and the promotion of microfinance

23. UNDP will assist the Government in the definition and implementation of specific financial instruments, such as microfinance and initiative measures, that can establish a framework conducive to individual or collective youth initiative. Such assistance will also involve the formulation of training policies appropriate to economic diversification needs.

Support for the reintegration of ex-combatants

24. UNDP will continue its assistance in the area of demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in the framework of the Multi-country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP). Concurrently, the activities relating to the collection and destruction of light weapons will be continued, while the Government's capacity will be strengthened, enabling it to complete the disarmament process and establish security in every region.

Environmental and natural resources management

25. The Republic of the Congo is facing a number of problems in the environmental sphere, particularly the destruction of forest and marine ecosystems and the degradation of the urban environment, quality of life and housing in the major cities.

Environmental information, education and awareness-raising

26. UNDP intervention will consist of promoting environmental information, education and awareness-raising through the programme "Environmental and natural resources management". An environmental information, education and awareness-raising centre will be set up to inform and educate the public at large about environmental issues.

Marine and coastal pollution

27. UNDP support will contribute to the rehabilitation of marine and coastal water quality. Such support will take place in the framework of a national strategy for rehabilitating marine and coastal waters polluted by offshore oil drilling at Pointe Noire.

Urban environment and improvement of living standards

28. UNDP will build the capacity of the Government and local communities for the elaboration and implementation of appropriate policies and programmes for an effective management of the urban environment with a view to improving the living standards of the population.

Protection of forest ecosystems

29. UNDP will support the Government in the implementation of the National Environmental Action Plan, particularly its dimension aimed at preserving forest wealth. The preservation of forests and steppes will be ensured through the creation of community forests that will make it possible to supply urban centres with wood for heating.

International waters, climate change and biodiversity

30. UNDP will support the Government in the implementation of the provisions of international conventions dealing with climate change, biodiversity and the preservation of waters of international concern.

Cross-cutting themes

31. The cross-cutting themes adopted — HIV/AIDS, gender and NICT — are issues which also involve governance, poverty reduction and environmental protection. All UNDP programme activities will include the dimensions relating to gender and the fight against AIDS and will, whenever possible, use NICT as potent management and communication tools.

Fight against HIV/AIDS

32. The spread of HIV/AIDS accelerated as a consequence of the successive armed conflicts, owing mainly to sexual violence against women.

Capacity-building in the implementation of the national strategic framework to combat HIV/AIDS

33. UNDP will support the National Council to Combat HIV/AIDS in the implementation of the national strategic framework to combat HIV/AIDS. Its support will consist of providing advisory services, assistance and training for effective programming of activities and rational management of funds mobilized for the implementation of the strategic framework. In addition, UNDP will continue its preventive activities in the schools and will provide support for advocacy activities.

Development of new information and communication technologies (NICT)

34. UNDP assistance will focus on: (i) support for the formulation of a national NICT development strategy together with an action plan for the development of the requisite infrastructure, and (ii) the installation of Internet nodes at Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville.

Gender

35. UNDP support will consist of building national capacity for an effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Special emphasis will be placed on including the gender dimension in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation

36. Current national capacity, which was broadly affected by the successive wars that the country has lived through, will not permit effective utilization of the national execution modality in the short term. Accordingly, this modality will be implemented in a selective and gradual manner, while developing the capacity required to enable national entities to implement the projects and programmes funded by UNDP. In the meantime, UNDP will have recourse to the expertise of the United Nations specialized agencies, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, non-governmental organizations, and occasionally, when circumstances so warrant, to the direct execution modality.

37. In drawing the lessons of past experience, and in accordance with the recommendations of the programme review, priority will be given to the programme approach. This approach will foster greater coherence in the programme as a whole. It will also make it possible to develop synergies and complementarities with the actions of other agencies of the United Nations system and other development partners.

38. Evaluation of the overall performance of this programme will take place annually through the tools provided by the strategic results framework. The programme will be subject to a mid-term review which will make it possible to align the programme approaches, if necessary, with those to be adopted in the framework of the UNDAF and the Government's new priorities. Furthermore, the programme's monitoring and evaluation mechanism will benefit from thematic and impact evaluations, which will be carried out in the framework of the resident coordinator system.

39. The UNDP country office is planning to formulate a new resource mobilization strategy, tailored to the new challenges, which will enable it to compensate for the relative weakness of its regular resources. This strategy will be based on targeted advocacy and on programmes and sectors in which UNDP has a proven comparative advantage. Along these lines, UNDP will emphasize the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme which in the past was funded mainly by bilateral and multilateral partners. In the area of governance and economic management in particular, the office will work in close cooperation with the African Development Bank, the World Bank, France and the European Union, in either a cost-sharing or a parallel financing framework. It should be noted that the programme theme dealing with environmental and natural resources management will be funded mainly by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and from resources other than TRAC 1 and 2. Lastly, the Government undertakes to increase its contribution to programme funding, in order to return to the pre-crisis level.

Annex

Results and resources framework

Strategic areas of support	*Intended outcomes*	*Indicators of outcome or purpose*	*Outputs, including key output indicators, where needed*	*Resources by strategic area of support (in thousands of United States dollars)*
Goal 1: United Nations Plan — Building the capacity of key governance institutions				
Increased capacity of the principal governance institutions				
G1-SGN2-SAS1 Institutional capacity of parliamentary structures, systems and processes	Increased effectiveness and representativeness of Parliament in discharging its legislative and governmental oversight duties	Officials and members of Parliament understand and play their institutional roles	Officials and 203 members of Parliament trained and better equipped to understand and play their institutional roles	*Regular resources* TRAC 1.1.1 177 *Other resources* Third party cost-sharing 300
G4-SGN2-SAS2 Ratification, implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Protocol thereto	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Protocol thereto ratified, implemented and monitored	Legislation reviewed in the light of the Convention	Reports available on the implementation and monitoring of the Convention	*Regular resources* TRAC 1.1.1 127 *Other resources* Third party cost-sharing 500
Increased social cohesion based on participatory local governance and strengthened communities and institutions				
G1-SGN3-SAS3 Capacity and partnerships between local authorities and civil society organizations	Local authorities and community members involved in planning and management of development and public service activities	Percentage of total public revenue allocated and managed at the local community level	• Local community administrators and civil society representatives trained and equipped to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate local development plans in 10 départements • Strengthened operational capacity of decentralized public services	*Regular resources* TRAC 1.1.1 279 *Other resources* Third party cost-sharing 700 Government cost-sharing 300
An efficient and responsible public sector				
G1-SGN4-SAS1 Effective and responsible reporting in public administration	Enhanced efficiency, responsibility and transparency in public administration	Institutional anti-corruption measures established and operating with independent mechanisms	Monitoring bodies and judicial bodies independent of one another, operating and strengthened (e.g.: Court of Auditors, High Court of Justice, etc.)	*Regular resources* TRAC 1.1.1 203 *Other resources* Third party cost-sharing 100 Government cost-sharing 100

DP/DCP/PRC/1

Strategic areas of support	*Intended outcomes*	*Indicators of outcome or purpose*	*Outputs, including key output indicators, where needed*	*Resources by strategic area of support (in thousands of United States dollars)*
Goal 2: United Nations Plan – Furthering governmental efforts in the formulation and implementation of the poverty reduction strategy				
Issues concerning human and financial poverty in the framework of national policy				
G2-SG1-SAS1 Development and implementation of poverty reduction strategies and policies	Strengthened capacity for poverty reduction and achievement of the MDG on the part of the Government and civil society	Poverty reduction strategies, plans and programmes incorporating MDG concerns formulated and implemented	• Support for the preparation and process of adoption of the interim and final PRSPs • Annual monitoring reports on the MDG available	*Regular resources* TRAC 1.1.1 127 *Other resources* Government cost-sharing 100
		Increased public awareness about HIV/AIDS	• Advocacy actions targeted to political and economic decision makers, employers, religious denominations, etc. • Number of teachers and pupils trained in issues relating to HIV/AIDS	*Regular resources* TRAC 1.1.1 279 *Other resources* Third party cost-sharing 800
		Growth in youth employment opportunities	• National policy on promotion of microfinance developed and implemented • Number of jobs and income-generating activities created; number of training sessions held	*Regular resources* TRAC 1.1.1 532 *Other resources* Third party cost-sharing 300 Fund/Deposit fund (Sweden) 1 000
		Improved public security	• Number of ex-combatants socially and economically reintegrated and number of weapons collected and destroyed	*Other resources* Fund/Deposit fund (EU) 2 000
		Increased public access to NICT	• Strengthened national NICT platform (Internet node) • National strategy for promotion and development of NICT available	*Regular resources* TRAC 1.1.1 380 *Other resources* Third party cost-sharing 500 Government cost-sharing 300

Strategic areas of support	*Intended outcomes*	*Indicators of outcome or purpose*	*Outputs, including key output indicators, where needed*	*Resources by strategic area of support (in thousands of United States dollars)*
Goal 3: United Nations Plan – Supporting efforts to promote sustainable environmental management				
Sustainable environmental management and energy development to improve the living standards and security of the poor				
G3-SGN1-SAS2 Institutional framework for sustainable environmental management and energy development	Strengthened capacity of national and sectoral authorities to plan and implement integrated approaches to environmental management and energy development that meet the needs of the poor	Governmental mechanisms established for planning and monitoring activities relating to conventions, international protocols, etc.	• National strategies, plans of action and reports available as agreed in international instruments	*Other resources* Fund/Deposit fund (GEF) 500
		Sectoral strategies/plans/ programmes incorporating ecosystem management and sustainable energy approaches and concepts developed and implemented	• Sectoral operational plans for preservation of ecosystems (marine, forest, freshwater, etc.) available and implemented	*Regular resources* TRAC 1.1.1 431 *Other resources* Third party cost-sharing 300 Government cost-sharing 200 Fund/Deposit fund (GEF) 500
				Regular resources TRAC 1.1.1 2 535 *Other resources* Third party cost-sharing 3 500 Government cost-sharing 1 000 Fund/Deposit fund (GEF) 4 000